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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (7/23): AMERICA HAS NO PERMANENT  
ENEMIES

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Main Stories:  
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Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas' July 22 meetings in Ramallah and Jerusalem lead coverage. The three dailies report that Abbas commented during a meeting with Fatah members that, "the Palestinian people are having difficulty negotiating with the Israelis." He added that if Israeli Defense Forces continue West Bank incursions and the humiliation of Palestinian security forces, he will withdraw Palestinian security forces from the city of Nablus and hold Israel responsible for the decision. In related coverage, front pages report that Abbas met with Israeli President Peres in Jerusalem. During a joint press conference, Abbas confirmed that, "a better future should greet our coming generations." Peres stated that Israel and the Palestinians will continue to work on solving the problems between them through "difficult compromises" made by both sides. Peres also focused on the need for the establishment of a Palestinian state living side by side with Israeli in peace and hope, according to coverage.

Palestinian Authority Premier Salam Fayyad's July 22 press conference in Ramallah captures headlines. Speaking after a meeting with members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, "not-including Hamas members", Fayyad stated that foreign aid has not yet materialized and the financial situation of the government is difficult. Fayyad confirmed that the Palestinian government is, nevertheless, making every effort to pay the salaries of public employees. Al- Hayat Al-Jadida quotes Fayyad stating that, "reunification of the homeland, under any scenario, is a top Palestinian priority, and that Israel has not presented any solution, "that Palestinians can accept." All dailies cover news that Fayyad will meet with Israeli Minister of Defense, Ehud Barak, on July 23 to discuss a number of issues, especially Israeli

incursions into the Palestinian Territories.

Front pages highlight the "bulldozer attack" on July 22 in West Jerusalem. In an apparent break from previous reporting on similar attacks, the dailies simply describe the perpetrator as an "attacker" and remain silent about a possible motive, thereby denying the dead assailant and his act, the customary glorification.

All dailies report that the "attacker" was 22-year old East Jerusalem resident Ghassan Abu Tayr and also note that 16 Israelis were injured in the attack. The dailies run front page pictures of the crime scene.

Quartet representative Tony Blair's call on the European Union to play a greater role in the peace process is front page news. Blair's call came during a July 22 meeting with EU foreign ministers, during which he also expressed his optimism about the possibility of Israelis and Palestinians reaching a peace agreement by the end of 2008.

Al-Ayyam highlights news that Hamas leader Sa'id Siam told local and Arab press in the Gaza Strip on July 22 that Hamas will not deal with Palestinian Authority President Abbas after January 2009 in his capacity as president. Siam added that Abbas has no intention of launching national dialogue and stressed that Hamas has already shown too much flexibility on the issue.

The three Palestinian dailies, Wafa news agency and a number of local news websites ran the July 22 Haaretz story alleging that the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem is increasing tension between Washington and Tel Aviv. Al- Hayat Al- Jadida runs the story on its front page.

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¶1. Independent Al-Quds runs its daily editorial by Rasim Ebaydat from Jerusalem, entitled, "America has no permanent enemies, when will Arab moderates learn that???" (7/23): "...America sees that engaging Iran... is better than encountering it militarily. This Iranian-American relationship should switch on a lightbulb for moderate Arab countries, who are... dependent on what they call their American ally and friend. Many indications show that this ally cares chiefly about ensuring its own interests... all the world... obeys the strong and not the weak. In several cases there has been a retreat by moderate Arab countries from their role and presence [in the region] which has enabled other regional countries to play a larger role... [moderate Arab countries] should know that being dependent on the American ally does not guarantee security. If America feels that these countries are a burden, it will find pretexts and justifications to not only... [exit the relationship], but also bring them before international courts..."

¶2. Independent Al-Ayyam carries an editorial by Hani Habib entitled, "Obama...prey to Israeli extortion" (7/23): "...pleasing Israel is what the two candidates [for U.S. presidency] seek... so, it is not strange to see Obama and McCain making statements about their foreign policy regarding Israel. This makes the competition for the White House a question of seeking Israel's approval... in our opinion, Obama faces a difficult job in Israel. His contradictory statements on the Middle East conflict have made Israelis more skeptical of his policies... McCain has taken advantage of [Obama's contradictions] and accused [Obama] of a lack of political experience... in addition to all that, some Israelis at the Foreign Ministry are afraid that Obama is an unknown quantity... Obama will face difficulties and extortion in seeking Israel's approval... and the Jewish state will push [him] psychologically, financially and morally via the Jewish lobby in the United States, to clarify his policies..."

Walles